

GENERAL ORIENTATIONS OF THE
MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN
THE CONTEXT OF THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Abstract

Romanian public administration and new public management are in need of a series of modernization actions resulted from theoretical progresses on European level whose application proved to have positive effects.

Among these modernization actions a focus on the following aspects must be mentioned: Ensuring the proper and transparent information levels and feed-back elements and social responsibility; Encouraging a proactive and prospective professional development; Ensuring of a public administration management which should support: interdisciplinary approach, focus on the quality of the public service, supporting the public-private partnership.

Dealing with such priorities can determine the beginning of the public administration's consecration as a European public administration, based on knowledge, which will have a positive impact on the performance of a nationally representative sector.

Keywords: modernization of the public administration, decentralization, professionalism, social responsibility

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MANAGEMENTUL INSTITUȚIILOR PUBLICE ÎN CONTEXTUL SOCIETĂȚII CUNOAȘTERII. ORIENTĂRI GENERALE

Mihail DUMITRESCU
Adelina DUMITRESCU

Mihail DUMITRESCU

Prof. univ. dr., membru titular al Academiei Oamenilor de
Știință din România – consultant CMC
E-mail: adelinadumitrescu02@yahoo.com

Adelina DUMITRESCU

Asist. univ. drd., Facultatea de Administrație Publică, Școala
Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative
E-mail: adelinadumitrescu02@yahoo.com

Rezumat

Administrația publică și noul management public din România reclamă o serie de acțiuni de modernizare rezultate din progresele teoretice înregistrate la nivel european a căror aplicare s-a dovedit benefică.

Printre acțiunile de modernizare se poate evidenția accentul pus pe: Asigurarea unei informări corespunzătoare cu caracter transparent și cu elemente de feed-back atât de necesare și responsabilitate socială; Impulsionarea unei perfecționări profesionale de tip proactiv și prospective; Asigurarea unui management al administrației publice care să susțină: abordarea interdisciplinară, accentul pe calitatea serviciilor publice, susținerea parteneriatului public-privat.

Rezolvarea unor astfel de priorități și a altora poate determina începutul consacării și a administrației publice ca administrație europeană, bazată pe cunoaștere și cu impact în creșterea performanțelor unui sector de activitate reprezentativ la nivel național.

Cuvinte cheie: modernizarea administrației publice, descentralizare, profesionalism, responsabilitate socială (RES)

1. EUROPEAN INFLUENCES ON THE MODERNIZATION OF THE ROMANIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

The modernization process of the European public administration is ongoing being accelerated in the past years as a result of the EU enlargement. In most countries, this modernization process has concentrated on four main reform domains (Ghete, 2007):

- Contract based procedures and responsibility policies;
- Consolidation of the relationship between the public and the administration, which should be realized on several initiatives (administrative procedure simplification, legislation codification, offering quality public services and commitments for these offered services, unique counters and social mediation policies);
- Evaluation of public policies;
- Adaptation of the European administration to new information and communication technologies.

Among the positive aspects of this approach we mention:

- Modernization efforts and renewal of the social dialogue;
- Strategy regarding responsibility based on management autonomy;
- Method modernization for the human resource management;
- Public policy evaluation.

However, references exist, which state that there must not be any intervention from the EC/EU organisms and any influence of EU members on the way in which problems are resolved within a state. Yet the situation of the public administrations within member states is definitely one of cooperation and cohesion desire and not adaptation in order to reach uniformity. In this regard, even though there doesn't exist an important package of administrative communitarian legislation, the impact of the EU's eastern expansion on Central and Eastern European public administration is significant. Thus in some areas covered by the EU legislation, technical specifications and standards exist which EU member states have to implement in order to be part of the global society.

This has lead to the establishing of strategic options regarding the Romanian public administration, following the general context of EU orientations with the purpose of ensuring an efficient and democratic public administration (Dumitrescu, 2005). The reform of the public administration has concentrated on:

- Public function reform and creation of a professional core of public servants;
- Ongoing decentralization and de-concentration;
- Improvement of the public policy formulation process.

At the same time, the development of the new public management was necessary for the achievement of these goals, which concentrated on: improved attention for (fundamentare) and achieving objectives, accent on the responsibility of public managers in achieving their objectives, increasing the autonomy and managerial flexibility degree, integration in managerial thinking of the concepts of economy, efficiency and efficacy (Androniceanu, 2008).

2. MODERNIZATION ACTIONS OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

In the last years, the idea that the public administration is facing decisive challenges for its modernization. EU integration, ongoing reform of the public administration and establishment of a knowledge based public administration are only a few, yet most important topics.

Regarding the first challenge, monitoring reports have identified since 2004 areas of improvement, especially what the reform of the public administration is concerned (all aspects, especially the local and regional public administration, decentralization, policy coordination, parliamentary process, transparency and the free access to information) (Dumitrescu and Braileanu, 2006).

On this basis recommendations and amendments are still being made, especially regarding:

- The necessity to improve the legislation with attention to poor quality impact analysis;
- The fact that not all implementation norms for laws create opportunities for bribery and corruption;
- The lack of clarity regarding the delegation of responsibilities and financial resources between different levels of the public administration;

- The ongoing power transfer process to the lower levels of public administration and their obvious limitation of financial autonomy determined by the reduced action capacity of local authorities, etc.

Several legislative, organizational and HR measures have been taken but they seem not to be sufficient. Thus we must ask ourselves, what is to be done since urgent actions are in place regarding:

- The accelerated professionalization of the leading and specialized personnel and the establishment of a set of rules so that the occupation of a management function should be proceeded by the following of a manager's training program;
- The decentralization program must be accompanied by an adequate financial autonomy. This regards especially attribution transfers from the central to the local public administration, seeing that the central public administration is becoming more and more the center for conceptual and synthesis interventions;
- Multiplication of practical actions regarding the development of the public administration;
- Personnel motivation growth in order to eliminate fluctuation of specialists associated with a roper dimensioning of the public administration personnel;
- Consolidation of the status of the public servant. We believe that, without diminishing democratic initiatives, it is necessary to establish minimum acceptance criteria persons who are running for different functions at different levels, which should endure the quality and valor of candidates.

The second challenge referring to the continuing accelerated reform of the public administration takes into consideration the following aspects:

- Validation of the goals of the reform acceleration strategies for the public administration, namely the existence of an efficient and democratic public administration;
- Upholding reform priorities of the public administration as follows: reform of the public function and creation of a professional core of public servants; continuing decentralization and de-concentration program and improvement of the public policy formulation process;
- Promotion of the new public management with its five core dimensions: economic, social, cultural-educative, behavioral and operational (Dumitrescu, 2005);
- Ensuring the professionalism of new public managers.

Regarding the third challenge, we consider that it concerns a concept of great perspective because the scientific efforts for putting knowledge into practice have been routed especially in favor of the economic sectors.

In order to answer to these challenges, the new public management has to approach the daily problems of public institutions in a radical and new way. The decision making process has to be based on a thorough analysis of all aspects of issues by using modern tools for asserting the best course of action.

Figure 1 presents a decision model based on objective analysis of input factors.

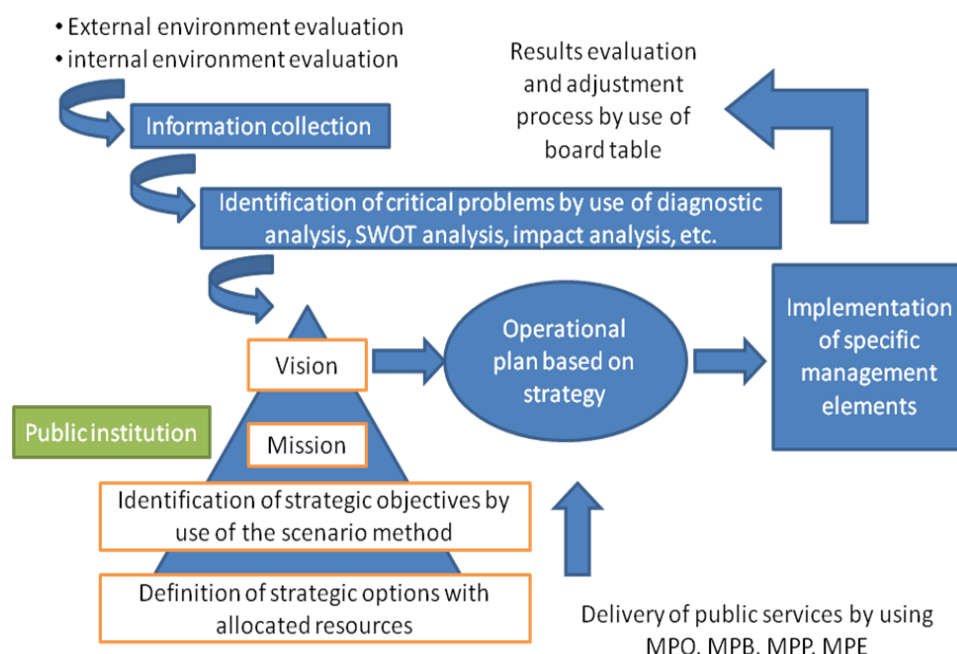


FIGURE 1 – MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT MODEL
(Source: Androniceanu, 2009)

This decision model also takes into account key factors of modern management as vision, mission and strategy, but also on results control and plan adjustment in conclusion to is-should be analysis.

3. ENSURING A NEW PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT OPEN TO PRIORITIES DETERMINED BY SOCIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC EVOLUTIONS.

The public administration must undertake a vast change process in order to respond to the demands of the citizens and influenced by the dynamics of diverse environment evolutions. Among these we will mention:

- Orientation of the public administration towards its clients (Matei, 2009) – the clients of the public administration are in this regard the citizens;

- Presentation and use of professional public managers;
- Development of a new approach within public institutions, namely, the learning organization;
- Transformation of the characteristics of the public service towards those of public affairs. The public manager will become a quasi-business man;
- Ongoing development of information systems towards an integrated network;
- Function of public institutions on the principle of self government;
- Emphasis on the creative side of the public management.

The chance that Romanian public administration will successfully integrate in European administrations depends on the rapid reforms but also on the promotion of the new public management and new public managers(Androniceanu, 2008). Therefore we mention content elements and support elements for the promotion of these two demands as well.

NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT	NEW PUBLIC MANAGERS
Content elements	Content elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisional autonomy growth in the context of decentralization and correlated with it, acceptance of the manager's responsibility in relationship to the decisions made; • Priority of the efficiency and efficacy aspects correlated with the social dimension of interventions; • Putting the citizen in the middle of central and local public administration authorities; • Transformation of public services in public business; • definition of project activities and careful follow-up of development in regard of time, quality, budget, integration and expectance constraints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional personnel working in the public administration; • Decisional autonomy along with the responsibility for undertaking projects, and programs or offering products and services; • Constant battle against deforming phenomena such as bureaucracy, corruption and nepotism; • Definition of minimal professional and moral prestige criteria for the occupation of jobs in the public administration, especially what top management position are concerned.
Support elements	Support elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting into valor the citizen's support; • Making use of success experiences in Romania and abroad; • Better motivation of the public administration personnel; • Particularization of general strategies at the level of activities and/or territory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhesion to the concept of permanent education; • Development of conception activities; • Use of modern leadership methods and techniques; • Creative application of the content of development strategy of the public administration and upholding the integration restraints of the European public administration.

FIGURE 2 – KEY ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC MANAGERS

(Source: Matei, 2006)

4. DEFINITION OF A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE BASED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

We believe that the referring of the EU to the knowledge based economy is also applicable for the public administration. Although economical by nature, these concepts are interesting for the promotion of the knowledge based public administration. Thus ideas such as innovation and knowledge based economy define the following national priorities:

- Establishment of innovation promoting education systems;
- Establishment of an European Institute of Technology;
- Building an attractive job market;
- Strengthening the bonds between research and industry;
- Promotion of regional innovation within new programs of the cohesion policy.

These priorities can easily be adapted and promoted to the public administration. The knowledge based public administration is a new physiognomy of this sector, in which knowledge will stand at the base of all actions. The knowledge based public administration will have the responsibility of producing, implementing and extending good practices having a great load of intangible assets (Nicolescu and Nicolescu, 2005).

The construction of the way that the knowledge based public administration should first take impulse factors into account, like: the EU regulation frame, legal evolutions, technological and scientific novelties and positive experiences of developed countries.

Also, actions of the public administration must be driven by socially responsible processes. The term "social responsibility" covers all dimensions of an institution's impacts on, relationship with and responsibilities to society as a whole (Andriof and McIntosh, 2001). These impacts, which have a ripple effect on society, can be divided on three broad, overlapping areas economics, environmental and social.

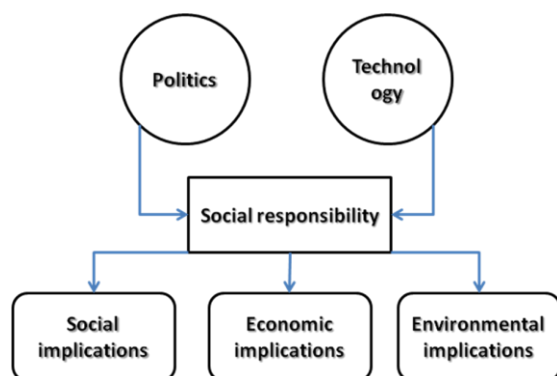


FIGURE 3 – THE INFLUENCES AND IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
(Source: Andriof and McIntosh, 2001)

There are two main components of assuming of Social Responsibility by the public sector: first there is the realization of those factors that can be improved and the public statement of the engagement to do so by assuming a set of objectives; second, the public sector must take the appropriate concrete measures to reach the assumed objectives. The assumption of these objectives is made towards society, which, in case of sensible improvements will grant the administration with its vote, similarly to the shareholders of enterprises who grant the board with a vote of confidence.

Social responsibility is one of the main, indissoluble features of the public sector, as all actions are undertaken for the benefit of the community they serve. Thus processes that define the activity of public institutions must on the one side be according to the “Three E Principle”, meaning the responsible spending of public money, and on the other side, they must be oriented towards the needs of the community, meaning the responsibility for the social consequences of the actions and activities. The efficiency of the management processes in public institutions is decisively determined by the quality of the personnel, and their professional performance essentially depends on the knowledge and application of public management procedures and techniques (Csorba, 2008).

The frame contents of any knowledge based public administration should reflect among other:

- Development of activities with a high conception, research, development and documentation content;
- Transformation of the workload into a more intellectual type of work;
- Accent on intangible assets like know how, patent pending, inventions and innovation;
- Accent on the intellectual capital;
- Putting into valor at an extended degree of the opportunities presented by the IT&C;

- Development of the knowledge basis and of the solution basis for handling issues;
- Development of the management's professionalism;
- Inoculation of social responsibility concepts at all levels of hierarchy.

5. Conclusion

The Romanian public administration still has a lot to achieve in order to integrate within the ranks of the EU framework, in spite of some modernization steps which have already been made. Also, a certain lack of preoccupation for the further elaboration of new studies, research or works of comparative analysis for the assertion of evolution processes can be observed.

Professionalism, responsibility and social responsibility, dialogue with the citizens, transparency of decision making processes, decentralization of the public administration are key elements for the creation of real conditions for developing an administration at European standards.

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